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1 John 4:18

May 31, 2007

Elders vote by slim margin to move HQ office to Texas

By Dixon Cartwright

Ministers meeting en masse for the 13th time since the founding in 1995 of the United Church of God an International Association (UCG) voted by a slim margin May 6 to move the church's headquarters from the Cincinnati, Ohio, area to Texas.

During the 2007 general conference of elders in a Holiday Inn in Cincinnati, 213 men, many accompanied by their wives to the annual gathering, made some surprising decisions that altered the governing 12-man council of elders.



Clyde Kilough

During balloting on the Sunday during the meetings, the ministers decided by only a seven-vote margin, 202-195, to move the home office from Milford, Ohio, to Denton, Texas, about 40 miles north of Dallas.

(A total of 397 men voted in that election, most while attending the meetings in Cincinnati, but others voting via telephone and Internet hook-ups that spanned the borders of several countries.)

The surprise, for some observers, wasn't that the general conference voted to accept the move that had been approved by the 12-man governing council of elders.

The surprise was that the measure almost lost. If only four men had voted the other way, the proposal to move would have died, at least for the time being.

The other surprise concerned the decision by the elders not to keep longtime Church of God elders Les McCullough and Leon Walker, both of Big Sandy, Texas, on the council.

Though neither man is a founding member of the church, which began in the spring of 1995 in Indianapolis, Ind., they both have been members of the UCG for more than a decade.

Other council members elected or reelected in the current voting: Roy Holladay, a former council member and former UCG president; Clyde Kilough, current president and council member; Victor Kubik, current council member; and Canadian Robert Berendt, new member of the council.

The council's post-election membership stands as follows:

Robert Berendt, Westbank, B.C., Canada; Aaron Dean, Gladewater, Texas; Robert Dick, Portland, Ore.; William Eddington, Melbourne, Australia; Jim Franks, Cincinnati; Roy Holladay, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Clyde Kilough, Cincinnati; Victor Kubik, Indianapolis, Ind.; Joel Meeker, Cincinnati; Richard Pinelli, Cincinnati; Larry Salyer, Salt Lake City, Utah; Richard Thompson, Orlando, Fla.

Conference decisions also included approval of the annual strategic plan, operation plan and budget.

For more information about the United Church of God, go to www.ucg.org or write P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, Ohio 45254, U.S.A.

For more information about this year's conference, see "Elder Talks About the UCG's Conference and Move to Texas," an interview with UCG elder and longtime Church of God member Ellis Stewart, beginning on this page of *THE JOURNAL*.

Elder talks about the UCG's conference and move to Texas

By Dixon Cartwright

Big Sandy, Texas—Ellis Stewart thinks the hundreds of elders of the United Church of God should have been more involved in the lead-up to the decision to move its home office from Ohio to Texas.

The 75-year-old UCG elder talked about the UCG and its recent general conference of elders, the planned move and the Churches of God as a whole in an interview with *THE JOURNAL* May 15.



Ellis Stewart

The elders of the United Church of God met formally May 6-7, 2007, in Cincinnati, Ohio, for the 13th time, if you count the church's founding conference.

Mr. Stewart was a member of the Radio/Worldwide Church of God from 1956 to 1995 and has been a member of the UCG since its founding in 1995 in Indianapolis, Ind.

(See another interview with Mr.

Stewart, "Longtime Elder Concerned About COG Hawks," in *THE JOURNAL* dated Oct. 31, 2001.)

This year's UCG get-together of 207 elders from several countries was "probably one of the best organized and smoothest that I've attended," Mr. Stewart commented.

By saying that, was he also saying that some of the UCG conferences in the past were not all that smooth and organized?

"Yes," replied Mr. Stewart. "You should be asking [church president] Clyde Kilough or some of the members of the council instead of interviewing me," he said. "You've got three who live here locally, or did."

Three council members were indeed residents of the Big Sandy area until this year's conference. Now there's only one: Aaron Dean.

Two others, Les McCullough and Leon Walker, finished the race with too few votes to stay on the council, their seats going to Roy Holladay and Bob Berendt.

Mr. McCullough and Mr. Holladay are both past presidents. Mr. Walker, although no longer on the council, continues as director of the church's Spanish efforts at preaching

See **UCG ELDER**, page 5



ARNOLD WHO?—Harry Sneider (right), a Church of God member since 1949, visits with a friend, Arnold Schwarzenegger, film star and governor of California, Jan. 19, 2007, at the Los Angeles Olympic Coliseum during a promotion of the 2016 Olympic Games in L.A. The two men have been friends since 1969. Besides Mr. Schwarzenegger, Dr. Sneider has trained 20 athletes in nine sports and written a best-selling book, *The Olympic Trainer*. Harry and Sarah Sneider have three grown children, Debbie, Karl and Rob. See also the article at right. [Photo by Sarah Sneider]

Sneiders visit old friend in Los Angeles

ARCADIA, Calif.—Harry Sneider recently sent *THE JOURNAL* an update about his and Mrs. Sneider's activities in the area of health and fitness.

He also sent along a photo his wife took of him and an old friend, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, in Los Angeles. (See the photo on this page.)

Harry and Sarah Sneider, married 38 years, are professional trainers working with families, seniors, teenagers and "occasionally world-class athletes," Dr. Sneider said.

Beginning in 1969, Dr. Sneider, before everybody had heard of Mr. Schwarzenegger, trained the future actor and governor in bodybuilding on the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena.

The Sneiders have produced a DVD on family fitness called *Sneider's Resistance Rebounding*. Dr. Sneider invites old friends and anyone curious about the DVD to write or phone him at harrysneider@earthlink.net or (626) 355-8964.

Legacy Institute volunteers learn eternally valuable lessons while teaching in Thailand

By Bill Stough

SPRINGFIELD, Mo.—Thirty-three-year-old Brian Smith felt discontented with life, even though, as he put it, he was pouring his life into work "and a little bit into church."

"I wanted to invest in something that has eternal value," he said. "Everything I do at work will one day be burned up. Stephanie and I each wanted to do something that has real meaning."

Stephanie, 31, is Mr. Smith's wife of 10 years.

"Then all the doors opened up," Mr. Smith said.

He was describing how he and Mrs. Smith and their two young sons ended up going to Thailand to teach at Leg-

acy Institute for nine months, from June 2006 through February 2007.

Texans Leon and Gloria Sexton began Legacy Institute, with addresses in Dundee, Ohio, and Bangkok, Thailand, about seven years ago. Besides its base in Chiang Mai, the ministry includes two school facilities—the Legacy Institute Leadership Training Centers in Chiang Mai and a farm two miles away.

Its stated mission is to train students to make a living and have a "good life." The latter goal involves learning about the Bible.

A typical enrollment at the school is about 18 students taught by four or five teachers. *THE JOURNAL* has published reports from many of the volunteer teachers in the past, including

Daniel Fehr, Mandi Steele, Jessica Wilson and Stacey Seelig. Miss Seelig is one of the teachers on the current Legacy staff.

Headed to Asia

Mr. and Mrs. Smith spoke at a church meeting during the Days of Unleavened Bread as guests here April 8, 2007. They had only recently returned to the United States.

The Smiths needed to raise \$14,000 to cover travel and other expenses for their mission.

Their local congregation, the Church of God Cincinnati, covered most of their expenses. To help with the costs, they also sold their house in Owensville, Ohio, and moved to See **LEON SEXTON**, page 4

Mr. Armstrong's face pops up on Drudge

In case you missed it, for several days in May an image of Worldwide Church of God founder Herbert W. Armstrong's face popped up on the Drudge Report, the popular news and gossip site on the Internet.

In automatic rotation of at least three related images, the pics were part of an advertisement sponsored by the Philadelphia Church of God, based in Edmond, Okla.

Two of the images advertised free copies of *Mystery of the Ages*, by Mr. Armstrong. Another plugged a new book by Stephen Flurry, *Raising the Ruins*. Both are free from the PCG.

Drudgereport.com, is the brainchild of Matt Drudge of Miami, Fla., and is one of the most visited Web sites in the universe. It reached the one billion page-view mark in 2002, according to Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia. In 2006 *Time* magazine named Mr. Drudge as one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

For a review of *Raising the Ruins*, see page 24 of this issue of *THE JOURNAL*.



Another COG member lands Big Sandy mayoralty

By John Warren

Big Sandy, Texas—City councilman Wayne Weese won the election for mayor of this East Texas town of 1,200 residents May 12, 2007.

Mr. Weese, 50, who attends the Church of God Big Sandy with his family, is a former water-plant specialist for Ambassador University, Big Sandy, where he worked 1977-1995, and is employed by Big Sandy Independent School District as maintenance and transportation director.

He and his wife, Karen, have been married for 31 years and have four children and three grandchildren.

The new mayor replaces Frank "Sonny" Parsons, pastor of New Beginnings Fellowship, which is the local Worldwide Church of God congregation.

"I am looking forward to serving the community," Mr. Weese told *THE JOURNAL*. "My main focus is increasing midsize-family housing in the city and utility upgrades."



Wayne Weese

Raising the Ruins acts as counterweight

The writer is a former Worldwide Church of God member who lived through the WCG's boom and bust in the 1970s and was well acquainted with Garner Ted Armstrong and other key players. Mr. Kellner wrote about some of the WCG's changes and part of the PCG's copyright battles in several news articles for Christianity Today magazine.

By Mark A. Kellner

ROCKVILLE, Md.—In recent weeks visitors to Matt Drudge's Web site (drudge.com)—currently ranked as 90th among the top-100-viewed Internet sites—have seen a “flash” advertisement prominently featuring the face of Herbert W. Armstrong.



Mark Kellner

A great number of Drudge readers may not know who Herbert Armstrong was or why they should even care.

But those of us with backgrounds in the Worldwide Church of God understand.

(See a report on the Drudge ad on page 1 of this issue of THE JOURNAL.)

A trip through the 435 pages of *Raising the Ruins*, by Stephen Flurry (\$19.95 in hardback, distributed by Midpoint Trade Books; see also www.raisingtheruins.com), is at once fascinating and frustrating to those of us who lived through the days of the decline and fall of what was the Armstrong Empire, as religious scholar Joseph Martin Hopkins termed it.

From humble beginnings, Mr. Armstrong built his Radio Church of God into a worldwide conglomerate, taking in more than \$100 million a year at the time of his death. This was at a time when \$100 million was real money and not the golden parachute of a failed corporate CEO.

But, as Oral Roberts confirmed to me in a 2002 interview, “success without a successor is failure.”

Eight years before his death, in 1986, Mr. Armstrong had excommunicated his son. In the intervening period he had alienated or pushed aside any

other potentially capable successor.

Who was left to run what was now the Worldwide Church of God?

The mantle fell on Joseph W. Tkach Sr., a presumably kindhearted church administrator largely unknown to most of the WCG's members or even to much of its ministry.

Stephen Flurry, son of Philadelphia Church of God founder Gerald Flurry, writes at his best when detailing the chaos that followed Mr. Armstrong's passing. The new leaders rewrote, or abandoned, doctrines with ease and often without great explanation. The better part of \$1 billion was raised—and then run through, Mr. Flurry contends—in the decade that followed Mr. Armstrong's demise.

The WCG lost more than half its membership and income and way more than half its ministers. The history of the many spin-offs and schisms that followed could fill a book on their own.

In the midst of all this, Mr. Flurry's father decided to reprint, without legal permission, *Mystery*, claiming it was the embodiment of the PCG's beliefs.

WCG officials sued, even though they had trashed thousands of *Mystery* copies, had no plans to resume printing and distributing the book and scampered away from most of Mr. Armstrong's key doctrines as outlined in the text.

But the WCG held fast to one thing: Herbert Armstrong's copyrights, bequeathed to the WCG at his death.

Stephen Flurry writes at his best when detailing the chaos that followed Mr. Armstrong's passing.

A six-year legal battle followed, with alternate rounds decided in favor of the PCG and the WCG.

After a bruising series of depositions from WCG leaders, who, writer Flurry contends, were forced to make a number of admissions under oath, the stage was set for the final judicial act when—surprise!—the WCG leadership, which had sued to protect its copyrights on the Armstrong work, offered to sell the copyrights to the Philadelphia group.

Money changed hands, copyrights passed over, and you can now request those Armstrongian publications from

the Flurry organization in Oklahoma.

Though a gripping story in many respects, Stephen Flurry's tale falters when it places a measure of blame for the 1978 California receivership of the WCG on Garner Ted Armstrong, who died in 2003.

Contrary to Mr. Flurry's assertions, Ted Armstrong was not an instigator of the lawsuit against the WCG that led to the receivership.

He was, at the time, no fan of his father's actions or lifestyle, but he wasn't a litigant or an instigator.

Mr. Flurry is also a bit uncritical of Herbert Armstrong, and, while that's understandable from a group that claims to carry on his legacy, it's a bit lacking when trying to compile a history for the ages.

There has yet to be an objective examination of the Armstrong phenomenon, and I can only hope a dispassionate historian or journalist will attempt one soon. Indeed, the question I ask after reading *Ruins* is who should own someone's legacy.

Mr. Armstrong's grandson, Mark Armstrong, son of Garner Ted, is (along with Mark's brothers David and Matthew and their children) the only one of HWA's descendants who is involved in carrying on his grandfather's religion that I'm aware of.

Yet Herbert W. Armstrong College resides not in East Texas but in Edmond, Okla., its name appropriated by the PCG.

I'm not an attorney, but something here just doesn't seem right. After all,

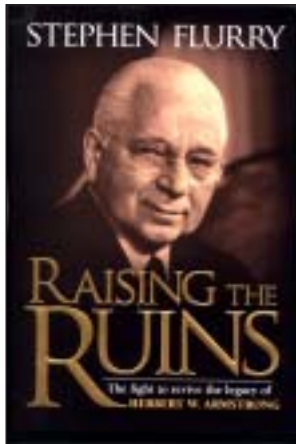
Gerald Flurry wasn't a top lieutenant of Herbert Armstrong. He wasn't even a company commander. Yet he has “raised an

Ebenezer” (1 Samuel 7:12) to HWA and with more than lentils acquired Mr. Armstrong's main printed legacy.

How all of that happened is a story that I'd like to read but won't be found in the pages of *Raising the Ruins*.

One can only hope for insiders such as David Antion, Art Mokarow and, particularly, Dr. Roderick Meredith to write their own memoirs, and soon!

This aside, the book is interesting and a counterweight to the anti-Armstrong books of current WCG leaders including Joseph Tkach Jr.



Stephen Flurry

Notes and quotes

Papers upgraded

SYDNEY, Australia—Craig White of Origins of Nations announces the upgrade of various papers at www.originsofnations.org.



Craig White

The upgrades include new covers, an index for the longer articles and improved text and layout. “It is my sincere hope that these articles provide further proofs for what HWA [Herbert W. Armstrong] taught on a range of subjects. I feel that this is very important, given that so much of what he taught is either being utterly destroyed or being watered down.”

Hebraic Feast in Oklahoma

HAWKINS, Texas—The Ami Yisrael Hebraic Congregation, founded by Tim and Angie Kelley, will again play host to the “Season of Our Joy” Feast of Tabernacles site at Lake Murray Lodge and Resort in Ardmore, Okla.

The observance will begin Wednesday evening, Sept. 26, and run through Thursday, Oct. 4.

“We attempt to look at the Bible from a Hebrew perspective,” Mr. Kelley said. “We understand that the Bible is a Hebrew book written by the Hebrew people and written about the Hebrew people.”

“We also acknowledge that Yeshua—Jesus—was a first-century Jew, as were the writers of the New Testament.”

For more information, see <http://season-of-our-joy.com>, or write the Kelleys at 294 PR 7904, Hawkins, Texas 75765, U.S.A.

Growing CGI in Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica—Pastor Ian Boyne reports the Church of God International in Jamaica continues to shatter its own attendance records, recording on Pentecost, May 27, 2007, its highest-ever feast-day observance of 300. High attendance during the Days of Unleavened Bread in April was 277. The Kingston congregation's average attendance is 225, Mr. Boyne reports.

THE JOURNAL plans to publish a report from Mr. Boyne on the growth of the CGI in his country in the near future.

Ultimately good news

MILFORD, Ohio—The United Church of God is thinking about changing the subtitle of its magazine. The periodical's full title is *The Good News: A Magazine of Understanding*.

Some on the 12-man council of elders have worried that the title as a whole inadvertently conveys too optimistic an outlook.

As council member and church president Clyde Kilough stated, although the magazine is titled *Good News*, the witness and warning message of the gospel sometimes can include “bad news.”

Church-publication editors have suggested several alternatives to the present subtitle: *Hope Beyond Today's Troubled World*, *Hope Beyond Today's World*, *Beyond Today's Troubled World*, *Beyond Today and Hope Beyond Today*.

The council on Feb. 28, meeting in San Diego, Calif., decided to postpone making a decision.

The present title combines the main title of an old WCG magazine, *The Good News*, with the subtitle of its flagship publication, *The Plain Truth: A Magazine of Understanding*.

Ex-AC student dies in shooting

RYAN, Texas—A 62-year-old former member of the Worldwide Church of God who attended Ambassador College, Big Sandy, in the late 1960s died by his own hand May 7, 2007, after entering the First National Bank in Bryan with a handgun and firing several shots “in the air,” according to news reports.



Mr. Holdren in 1968

The resident of College Station, Texas, who mailed handwritten notes to news media and a congressman describing his financial frustrations, including multiple penalties for bounced checks levied on his account by the bank, also wrote that he did not plan to shoot anyone.

He demanded to see the bank president and another employee, but both were not on the premises. He shouted a warning for employees and customers to leave. When police arrived, he fatally shot himself.

A friend of Mr. Holdren who said he “knew Eddie better than anyone,” John Dickerson of Fayetteville, Ark., told THE JOURNAL that his friend was in poor health and suffered from the effects of drugs he had taken as pre-

scribed treatment for bipolar disorder.

In 2004, Mr. Dickerson said, he and Mr. Holdren, a mid-1960s veteran of the Vietnam War, visited and “discussed Ambassador College days a lot, and old friends. However, he became increasingly bitter about life in general, the raw deal he had got and so on, increasingly negative.”

Mr. Dickerson said the Texas attorney general “garnisheed [Mr. Holdren's] government disability check, then tacked on interest and produced an impossible situation for repayment. His monthly stipend barely kept him alive. Then recently the VA [Veterans' Administration] reduced his income, and the situation evidently became unbearable, plus the bipolar manic-depressive tendencies, so he just snapped.”

Mr. Holdren owed child-support payments that had been past due for more than two decades. In one of his notes he mentioned that he had considered a “propane plan” to deal forcefully with “child support headquarters” but decided that “a Christian, even a bad one like me, wouldn't kill people.” “Amazingly,” Mr. Dickerson told THE JOURNAL, “he did have a faith until the end. He told me over and over he just wanted to die and wake up when the Kingdom was here.”

Mr. Holdren is survived by a grown son and daughter.

His friend Mr. Dickerson receives E-mail at txndwnunder@yahoo.com.

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